

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUENOS 07193 311548Z

65

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 ACDA-05

/061 W

----- 081999

R 311501Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3287

INFO USIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7193

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SOPN, AR

SUBJECT: NEW THREAT TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

REFS: A. BA 3557 AND B. BA 5095

SUMMARY. A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS AGAIN HIGHLIGHTED THE PRECARIOUS STATE OF FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN ARGENTINA. REACTION TO THE DOCUMENT IN PRESS AND EVEN SOME OFFICIAL CIRCLES HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD AND GENERALLY NEGATIVE. THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF THE SITUATION MAY BE THE SOURCE OF THE THREAT.

1. ON OCT 28 THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, THROUGH THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARIAT, ISSUED A "CALL FOR REFLECTION AND RESPONSIBILITY" TO THE MEDIA IN WHICH IT WARNED JOURNALISTS TO AVOID "SOURCELESS REPORTS, ASSUMPTIONS, SPECULATION, FALSE INFORMATION AND OTHER FORMS OF UNDERMINING INSTITUTIONS AND CONFUSING PUBLIC OPINION." THESE TACTICS, THE COMMUNIQUE ADDED, "DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY AID...THE MULTIPLE, MANY FACETED, SUBTLE, AND INSIDIOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTION (OF SUBVERSION)." THE STATEMENT CONCLUDED THAT "THE AUTHORITIES WILL GUARANTEE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BUT WILL BE INFLEXIBLE IN THE ADOPTION OF MEASURES THAT THE LAWS CONTEMPLATE FOR THOSE WHO DETRACT FROM OR DISTORT IT."

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 07193 311548Z

2. REACTION IN PRESS AND EVEN SOME OFFICIAL CIRCLES HAS BEEN WIDESPREAD AND GENERALLY NEGATIVE. CRONISTA CALLED THE COMMUNIQUE "AMBIGUOUS", PRENSA SAID IT IS A "DIRECT THREAT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION" AND OPINION THEORIZED THAT "THE MINISTRY (OF INTERIOR) APPEARS TO EMBODY THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH OFFICIALDOM IS WORKING IN PREPARING SANCTIONS AGAINST THE PRESS DESTINED TO BE PART OF AN 'OMNIBUS BILL' DEALING WITH QUESTIONS OF SECURITY AND DEFENSE BY CONSIDERING AS SUBVERSIVE ALL NEWS ABOUT IRREGULARITIES IN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE (JUSTICIALIST) PARTY." SOME LEGISLATORS AND THE BUENOS AIRES CITY COUNCIL HAVE ALSO EXPRESSED RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE COMMUNIQUE AND ITS "VAGUENESS" AND "UNUSUAL" NATURE.

3. FONMIN CASTEX ON OCT 29 EXPRESSED TO AMB HILL HIS OPINION THAT THE GOVT FEELS THAT OPINION, CRONISTA, AND THE BUENOS AIRES HERALD HAVE GONE TOO FAR IN THEIR CRITICISM OF THE GOVT, THAT THEY ARE ACTIVELY AIDING AND ABETTING SUBVERSION, AND IMPLIED THAT ACTION MIGHT BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM.

4. COMMENT: THE MOST DISTURBING ASPECT OF THE SITUATION MAY BE THE SOURCE OF THE THREAT. ON PAST OCCASIONS (SEE REFTELS) WHEN FREEDOM OF THE PRESS APPEARED TO BE IN JEOPARDY THE PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARIAT WAS THE DIRECT SOURCE OF THE PRESSURE. THE SHIFT TO THE MUCH MORE POWERFUL AND POLITICAL INTERIOR MINISTRY IS PARTICULARLY OMINOUS IF, AS APPEARS TO BE THE CASE, THE GOVT INTENDS TO USE THE LEGITIMATE SUBVERSION ISSUE AS A COVER TO INTIMIDATE OR OTHERWISE SILENCE ITS MEDIA CRITICS.
HILL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CENSORSHIP, COMMUNIQUES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BUENOS07193
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750379-0375
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975103/aaaaabun.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <19 NOV 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW THREAT TO FREEDOM OF THE PRESS
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006